

## TWINBERRY HONEYSUCKLE

*Lonicera involucrata* Banks ex  
Spreng.

Plant Symbol = LOIN5

Contributed by: USDA NRCS National Plant Data  
Center



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### Alternative Names

twinberry, black twin-berry, four-line honeysuckle,  
bearberry honeysuckle

### Uses

**Warning:** Twinberry honeysuckle is considered  
toxic and should be used with caution.

**Ethnobotanic:** The Quileute and Kwakwaka'wakw  
people used these berries as a black pigment (Pojar &  
MacKinnon 1994). The Haida rubbed the berries on  
the scalp to prevent hair from turning gray (Ibid.).  
A decoction of the bark has been applied to a  
woman's breasts to encourage milk flow (Moerman  
1998). An infusion was used to treat chest and  
stomach complaints and to cleanse the body (Ibid.).  
The Carrier boiled the leaves and used the liquid to  
bathe sore eyes, or applied the crushed leaves as a  
poultice to open sores (Pojar & MacKinnon 1994).

### Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State  
Department of Natural Resources for this plant's

current status, such as, state noxious status and  
wetland indicator values.

### Description

**General:** Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae).  
Twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*) is an  
erect clustered shrub one to three meters high with  
freely exfoliating bark (Peck 1961). The leaves are  
opposite, short-stemmed, somewhat elliptical to  
broadly lanced shaped, pointed often hairy beneath  
(Pojar & MacKinnon 1994). The flowers are yellow,  
tinged with red, and cupped by a large pair of green  
to purplish bracts. The fruits are roundish or oval,  
blackish berries, paired on long axillary stalks and  
distinct; ripening August or September (Grimm  
1993).

**Distribution:** *Lonicera involucrata* is widely  
distributed across North America from Quebec  
westward to Alaska and British Columbia and  
southward into California, Colorado, Utah, and  
Arizona (McMinn 1939). For current distribution,  
please consult the Plant profile page for this species  
on the PLANTS Web site.

### Adaptation

Twinberry honeysuckle is typically found in moist  
forests, clearings, riparian habitats, swamps and  
thickets (MacKinnon, Pojar & Coupe' 1992). It  
prefers a good moist soil but can succeed in any  
fertile soil. This species grows best and produces  
abundance of fruit in open sunlight compared to a  
lost of fruit when grown in the shade.

### Establishment

**Propagation by Seed:** *Lonicera involucrata* seeds  
should be collected from isolated plants and extracted  
by maceration in water (Dirr & Heuser 1987). Sow  
the seeds as soon as they are ripe in a cold frame.  
When the seedlings are large enough, plant them  
directly into their permanent positions in late spring  
or early summer.

### Management

Twinberry honeysuckle berries has been noted as  
poisonous. The fruit is bitter and sour and are eaten  
by some. Since the European species of honeysuckle  
species are regarded as emetic and cathartic, they are  
better avoided in favor of something less dubious  
(Mozingo 1987).

### **Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**

Somewhat available from native plant nurseries. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

### **References**

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Pojar, J. & A. MacKinnon 1994. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska*. Lone Pine Publishing, Redmond, Washington.

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Edited: 10jan02 jsp; 25feb03 ahv; 060802 jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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